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SIPDIS

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TAGS: PGOV PTER PINR PREL IR SW

SUBJECT: IRANIAN MUJAHEDIN-E-KHALAQ (MEK) PROTESTS IN SWEDEN

Classified By: CDA Robert Silverman for reasons 1.4 (B) & (D).

Summary

**¶1. (C)** In advance of the January 25 GAERC, hundreds of exile Iranians demonstrated in downtown Stockholm to have Mujahedin-E-Khalaq (MEK, also known as the People's Mujahedin Organization of Iran or POI) removed from the EU Terrorist list. After MEK's removal by EU foreign ministers at the January 25-26 GAERC, Swedish MFA official told poloff the EU was legally bound to remove MEK from the list, as there is no evidence of MEK terrorist activity in the past seven years. However, Sweden has asked the French to put forward any evidence it may have of post-2001 MEK terrorist activity. End Summary.

Support for MEK

**¶2. (U)** Prior to the January 25-26 GAERC discussion on removing MEK from the EU Terror list, MEK supporters in Sweden demonstrated and issued press statements advocating for removal.

-- On January 8, hundreds of exile Iranians demonstrated in Stockholm city center for the removal of MEK from the EU Terrorist list. (Note: Official statistics from 2007 state 56,561 Swedish residents were born in Iran. End note.)

-- On January 14, Mohammed Mohaddesin, foreign spokesperson for the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI), an umbrella organization for MEK based in France, visited Stockholm to gather support.

-- Full page advertisements were published twice in the national Swedish daily Svenska Dagbladet. The ads were sponsored by the Iranian Democratic Academic Association, (IDAF), and stated, &The EU has terror listed the most important Iranian opposition group, MEK, on behalf of the Iranian regime. Different courts have seven times invalidated the listing of MEK and the EU Council refuses to carry out the ruling.<sup>8</sup> The ad also declared that a group called &In Search of Justice ) the European Committee for the de-listing the MEK (ISJ),<sup>8</sup> has the support of 2,000 parliament members from all over Europe.

Official Reaction

**¶3. (C)** After the Council of Ministers meeting on January 27, Svenska Dagbladet quoted Swedish FM Bildt calling the issue within the EU legal, not political. Dag Juhlin-Dannfelt, Director of the Gulf Office in the Middle East Department of the MFA, explained to Poloff on January 27 that Sweden has no illusions that MEK is a terrorist organization and is linked to terrorist activities in Iraq. MEK only has been active in Sweden through cover organizations, including the Committee on the Rights of Women. However, he said MEK's removal from

the EU terror list is mandated if a listed organization is idle for seven years. Sweden abstained from the vote to remove MEK from the list, but encouraged the French to make available any new information they have that demonstrates MEK's support for terrorism after 2001. MFA Legal Advisor Carl Henrik Ehrenkrona clarified to poloff on January 28 that Sweden does not support France's appeal of the European Court of Justice ruling, but rather supports French officials putting forward new information.

Comment

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¶4. (C) Sweden-based MEK elements may not have committed acts of violence in recent years, but they have threatened such. On November 12, 2007, Svenska Dagbladet published two articles based on interviews with Swedish academics and two U.S. officials: IAEA Ambassador Greg Schulte and NEA DAS Ambassador Larry Butler. Butler was quoted saying the MEK indoctrinated its members and was on the State Department list of terrorist organizations. Four days after the articles appeared, 400 Swedish residents demonstrated against the articles and for the MEK. Subsequently, Butler and the Swedish journalist who reported his comments received threats from individuals claiming association with MEK.

SILVERMAN